

1977

# Second Meeting of the Spiritan Studies Group

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### Recommended Citation

(1977). Second Meeting of the Spiritan Studies Group. *Spiritan Papers*, 2 (2). Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/spiritan-papers/vol2/iss2/7>

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## SECOND MEETING OF THE SPIRITAN STUDIES GROUP

The Spiritain Studies Group, which was founded a year ago, held its second meeting in Rome from December 31 to January 2. All the members were present.

Work began at 9:00 o'clock on December 31. The Superior General was present and spoke of the interest in Libermann which seems to be rising anew in the whole Congregation-an interest which centralizes and synthesizes the spirit of the Congregation and is in agreement with the two-fold objective of the Group: *a*) research in depth on his life and teaching, with reference to the sources, in view of making known both the Congregation's history and its spirituality; *b*) a bringing of this message to all the confreres by means of *Spiritain Papers* and other publications, by means which are adapted to modern times, and giving assistance to the General Council in its task of stirring up enthusiasm in the Provinces and Districts and in all the countries where Spiritan missionaries work.

Before getting down to the agenda, the Group heard from Father Brasio. This Father, from the Province of Portugal, has been in Rome since the first of October at the invitation of the General Council to do research in the Archives of Propaganda concerning the history of the Congregation and especially the life and work of Libermann. He presented to the Group an inventory of his recently completed findings. It is unusually rich, including: *a*) many letters written before the "fusion" to the Superiors General of the Holy Ghost, or written by these latter; *b*) several letters of-or to-Libermann (some of them previously unpublished), as well as letters to Schwindenhammer, Le Vavas seur, Tisserant, Collin, Bishop Barron, the Nuncios in Paris, etc. . . ; *c*) memoranda from Libermann to the Propaganda written in 1840 and in 1846, documents relating to the "fusion"; *d*) other documents relating to many countries in Africa and the West Indies, as well as Australia and St-Pi-

erre-et-Miquelon, with which the Congregation was concerned. The regular agenda dealt with the following:

1. *Report of the activities of the Group during the past year:*

They were rather limited, due to the fact that Father Martins, the Secretary, only took up his duties in October, and that Father Lécuyer, the President, had some serious health problems to contend with. Still, the Group was not completely inactive and it managed to bring out the first issue of *Spiritan Papers*. Among personal work of the Group members, we can note an important article by Father Sigris in the *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*: "Libermann (F.M.P.) 1802-1852. 1) Life-2) Works-3) Spiritual Teaching" (cf. Bibliography). The editor (Beauchesne, Paris) proposes to make a reprint in the form of a 50-page pamphlet. Father B. Kelly gave several conferences and retreats based upon Libermann in Canada and in Nigeria. They were well received.

2. *Finance:*

Since *Spiritan Papers* and the Group itself have no revenue, it was decided to ask the General Council for a "regular budget" to take care of current expenses: production of *Spiritan Papers*, equipment and operation of the Secretariate, the Secretary's travel, help for poor Provinces which may wish to publish in their own language an article from *Spiritan Papers* which has particular interest for them, etc. Extraordinary and occasional expenses would be arranged in understanding with the General Council.

3. *Spiritan Papers:*

In principle, they will appear three times a year in French (*Cahiers Spiritains*) and in English, and will be sent to all our communities. If a Province or District wishes to receive more copies than were sent of the first issue, they should let us know and we shall see what can be done. At the same time, the Group accepts-even requests-the collaboration of the confreres in the writing of the *Spiritan Papers*, especially in what has to do with the teaching of the founders, the activities of the members, the history of the Congregation, but it reserves the right to decide for or against the publication of any item submitted.

#### 4. *Other Questions:*

The Group would be grateful to all members of the Congregation if they would inform us, through the offices of the Provincial or District Superior or Secretary, of all publications about the Congregation or the Venerable Founder which appear in their respective areas. This is in view of drawing up a Spiritan Bibliography.

Works about Spiritan writings and about Libermann are becoming very rare; some are completely out of print. If some communities have two or more copies of any of them, it would be generous on their part if they would supply them to communities which have none. The Center could serve as a clearing-house between them. . .

#### 5. *Work to be undertaken immediately by the Group:*

a). Father Sigrist is going to prepare a new *Spiritual Directory*, in a new format and comprising, in historical order, texts from Poullart des Places and Libermann, as well as other more recent texts.

b). Father Koren is going to revise and bring up to date his book *The Spiritans*, which is without any doubt the best thing of its kind we have in the Congregation.

c). Father Lécuyer has begun the publication of a series of articles on the Holy Spirit in the writings of Libermann. These will appear in *Esprit-Saint* (a review of spirituality published at rue Lhomond).

The Group decided that its next annual meeting will be held at the same time next year, but in Paris. At the end of the meeting, attention was drawn to the fact that February 26, 1979 will be the tercentenary of the birth of Poullart des Places. The Group urges the confreres to begin now to acquire a better knowledge of our first founder and his writings. His works, in French and in English, were edited by Duquesne University and can be obtained there. . . .

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

First of all, let us draw attention to an important article by Father Paul Sigrist, C.S.Sp.: "Libermann (F.M.P.) 1802-1852. 1.Life-2.Works-3.Spiritual Teaching" which appeared in the *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, Fasc. LXI (1976) col. 764-768, and Fasc. LXII-LXIII (1976) col. 769-780. (Ed. Beauchesne, Paris). The editor suggests that a reprint of this article be made, in the form of a pamphlet. The price would be reasonable and there could be wide distribution.

In the same *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, there are entries about two Spiritans: "Father Louis Liagre 1859-1936" by Father Marc Duval (Fasc. LXI-1976-col. 748) and "Father Victor Lithard 1872-1944" by Father Joseph Bouchaud (Fasc. LXII-LXIII-1976-col. 872-873).

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–, – *Histoire religieuse de Sénégal*, 126 pp., illus., 1976 (Ed. Clair-afrique, Place de l'Indépendance, Dakar). "The author, as the competent archivist of the Diocese, was well placed to make the origins of the Church in the country come alive for us. . . After the principal sections which study the three periods typical of our religious history, the Annex entitled 'Eglise de Dakar' gives a rapid overview of the organization of the Archdiocese and is a fitting conclusion to the continual development of the work of God in Senegal." (Cardinal H. Thiandoum, Archbishop of Dakar).

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